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(54) **OPTICAL TRANSMISSION AND RECEIVING DEVICE FOR IMPLEMENTING PASSIVE ALIGNMENT OF COMPONENTS AND METHOD FOR PASSIVELY ALIGNING COMPONENTS**

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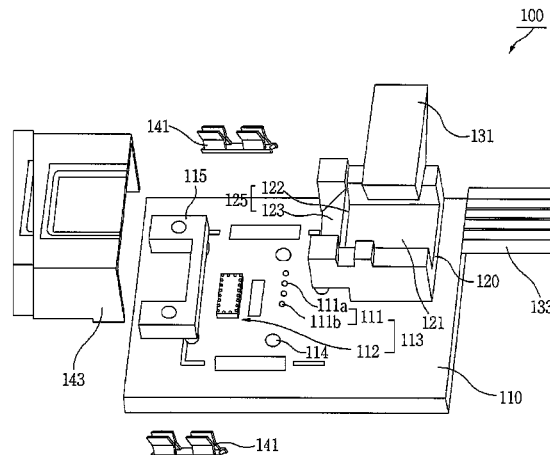
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An optical device for implementing passive alignment of parts and a method therefore, more particularly an optical device and a method therefore that utilize an alignment reference part **115** arranged on the substrate **110** to passively align an optical element part **111** with a lens-optical fiber connection part **120**. For the passive alignment of parts, connection pillars **115b** of an alignment reference part **115** are coupled to substrate holes **114**, one or more light-emitting elements **111a** and one or more light-receiving elements **111b** are aligned in a row in a particular interval with respect to alignment holes **115a** arranged opposite each other in the alignment reference part **115**, a lens-optical fiber connection part **120** is aligned with respect to the alignment holes **115a**, and an optical fiber **133** is aligned with the optical alignment point at a surface **122b** of a prism forming a portion of the lens-optical fiber connection part **120**. In addition, the optical fiber **133** is secured with an optical fiber pin **131**, after which a metal case **143** is covered and coupled with a case securing pin **141**. The optical device for implementing passive alignment of parts provides the advantages of simplifying the passive optical alignment for multiple channels, so as to minimize alignment error, and of reducing and simplifying the structure of the optical modules and minimizing the number of parts used, so as to lower the costs of the optical modules.

13 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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Fig. 1

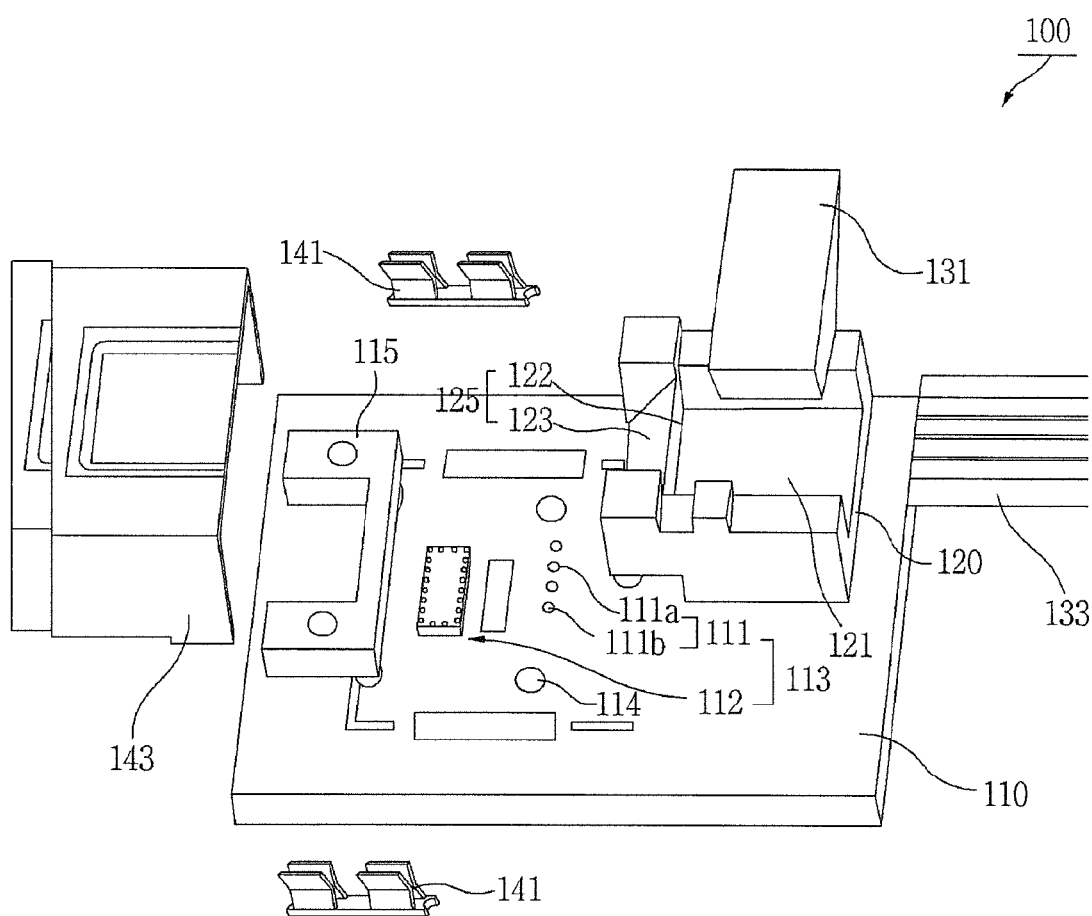


Fig. 2

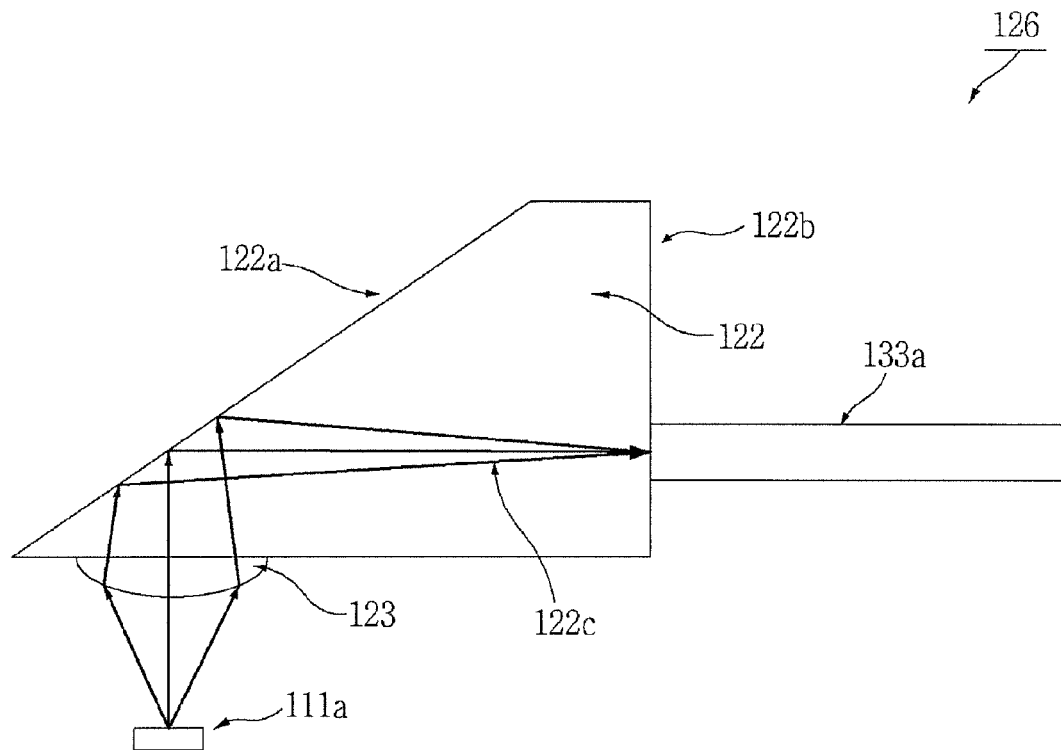


Fig. 3a

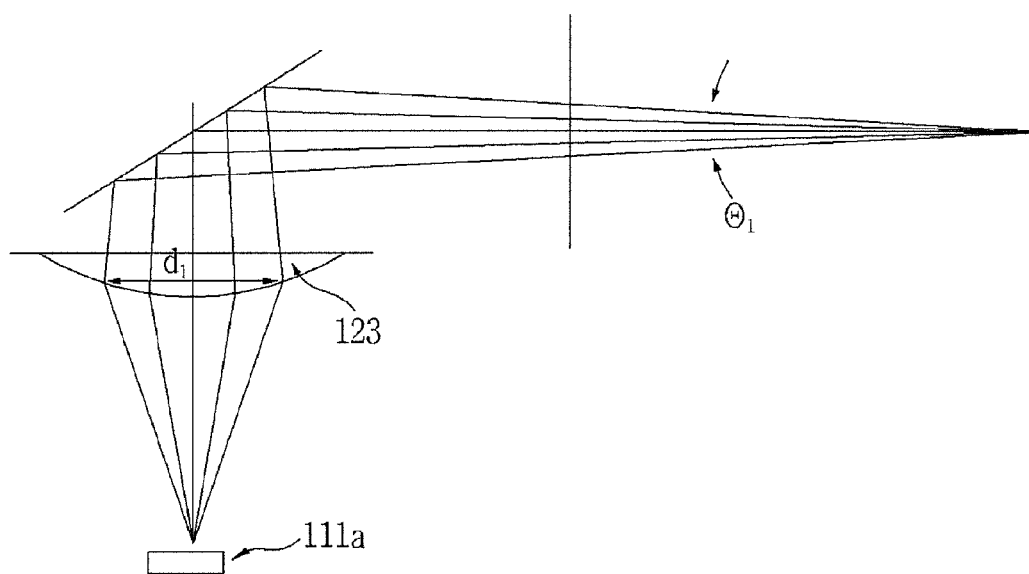


Fig. 3b

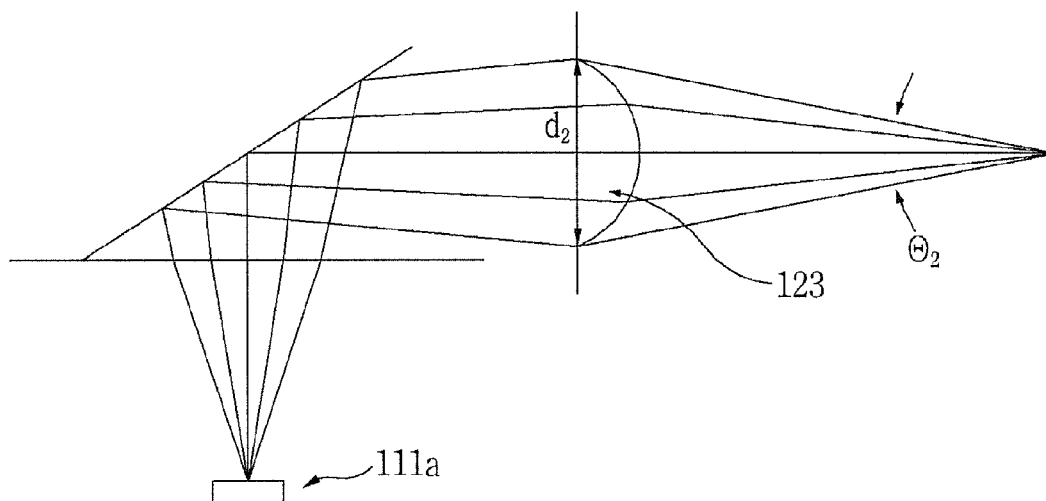


Fig. 4

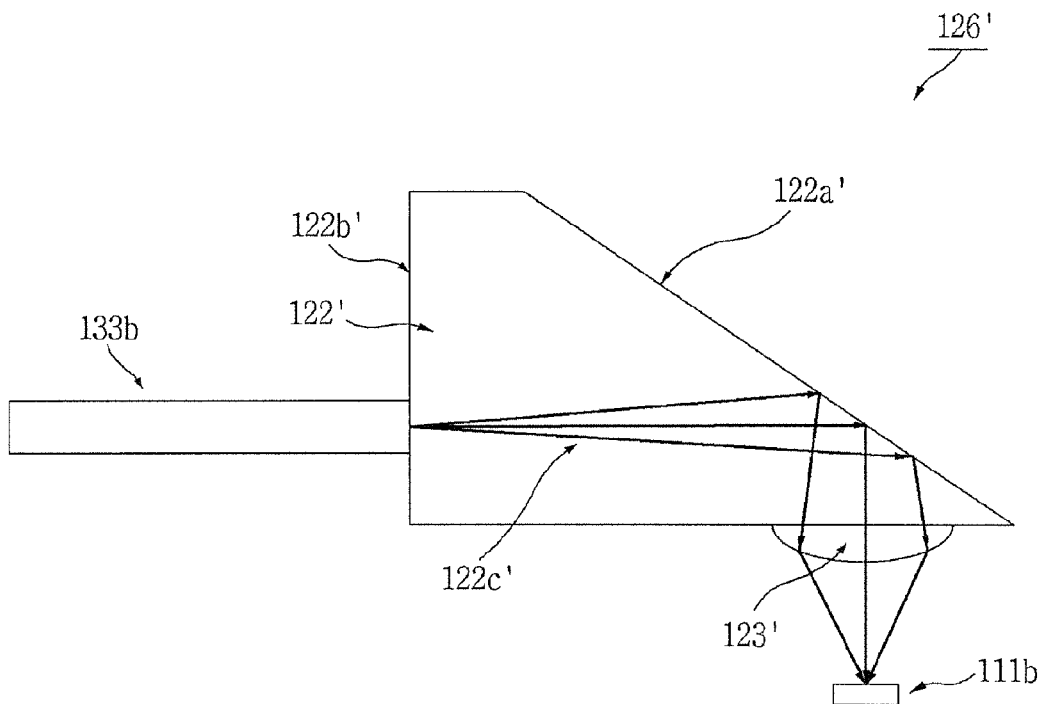


Fig. 5

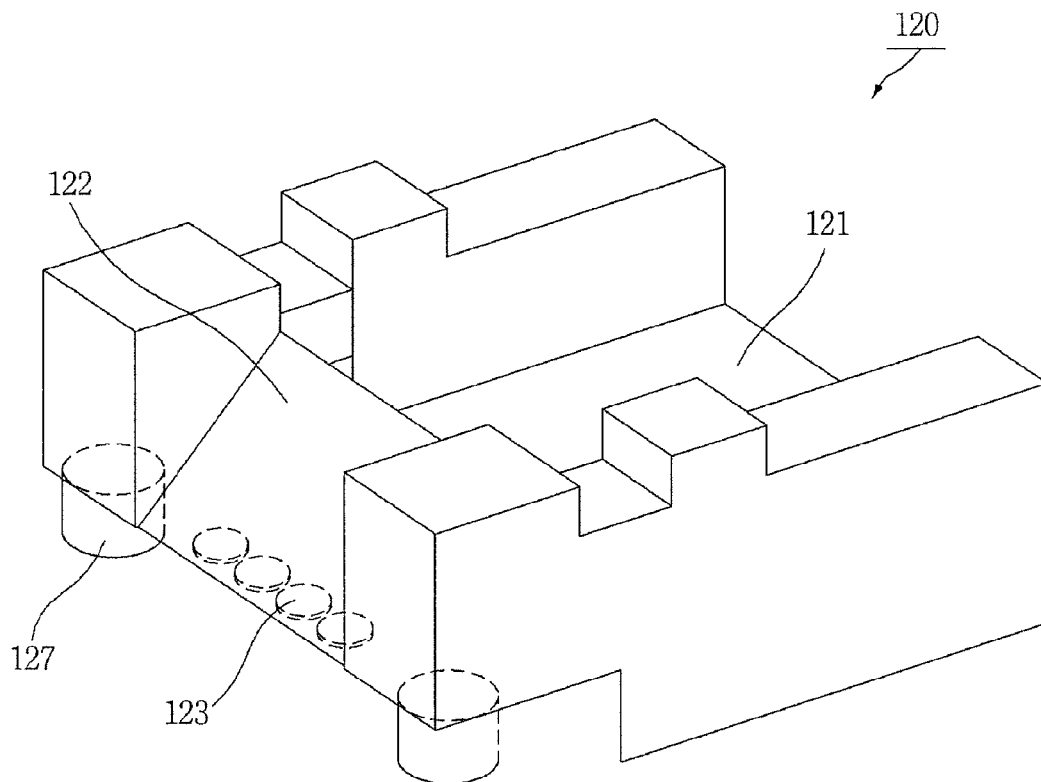


Fig. 6

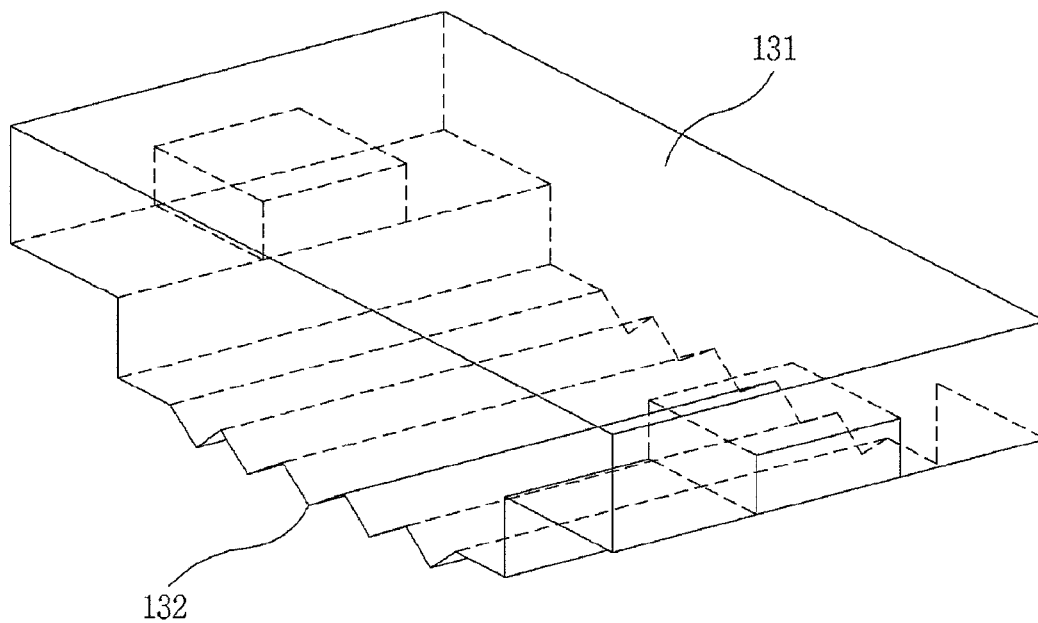


Fig. 7

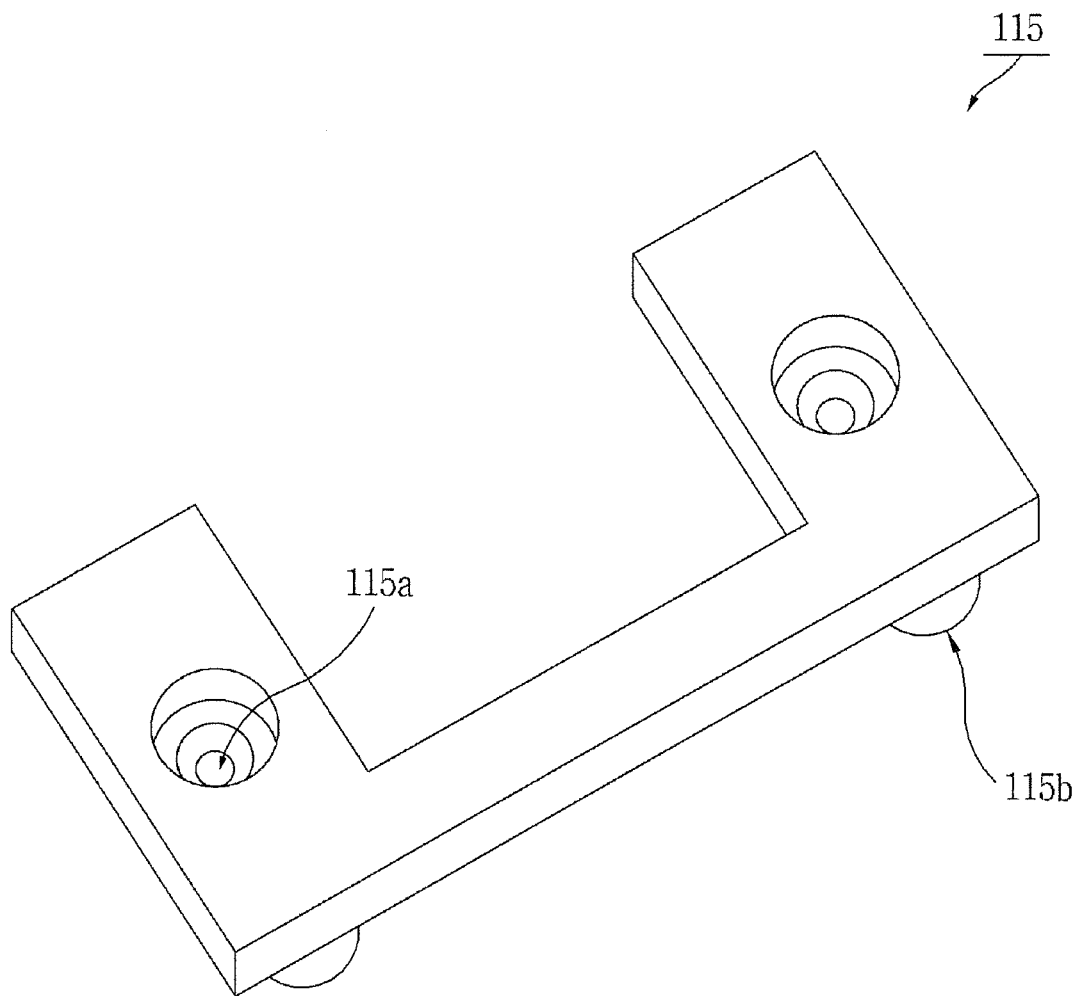


Fig. 8

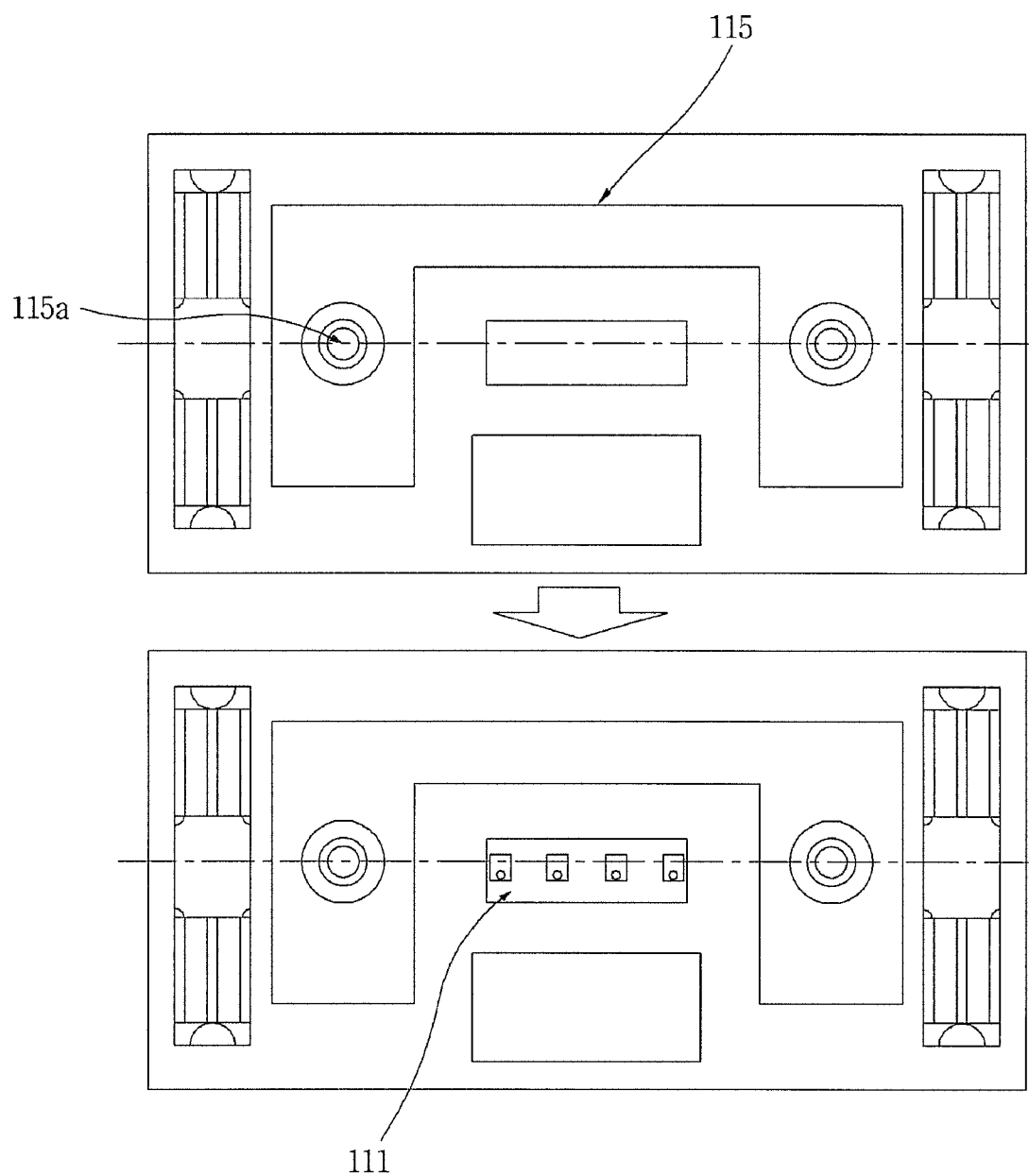


Fig. 9

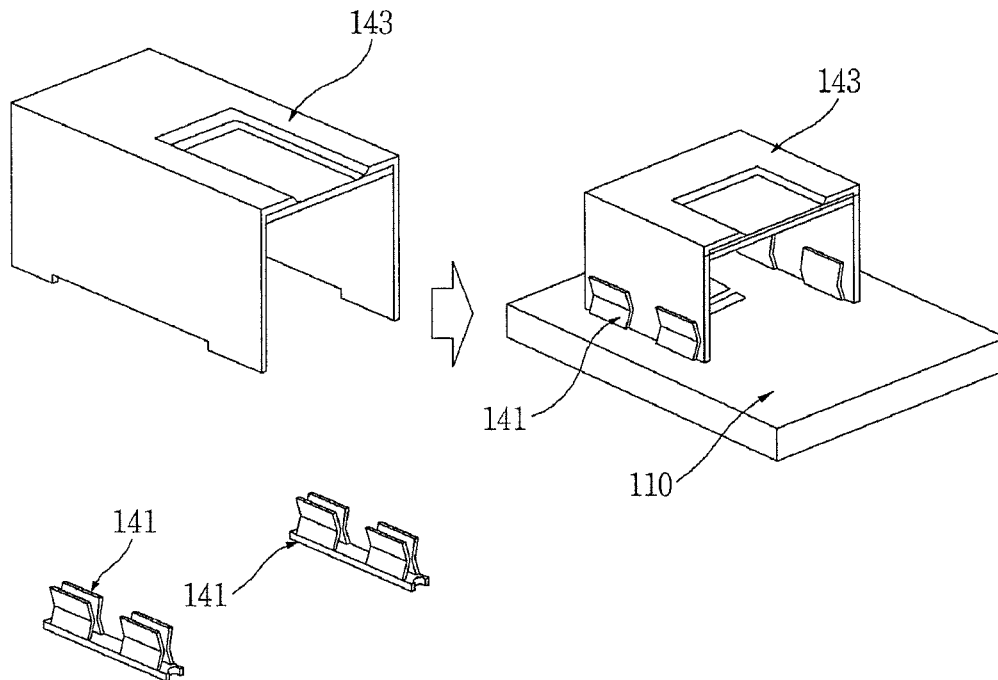


Fig. 10a

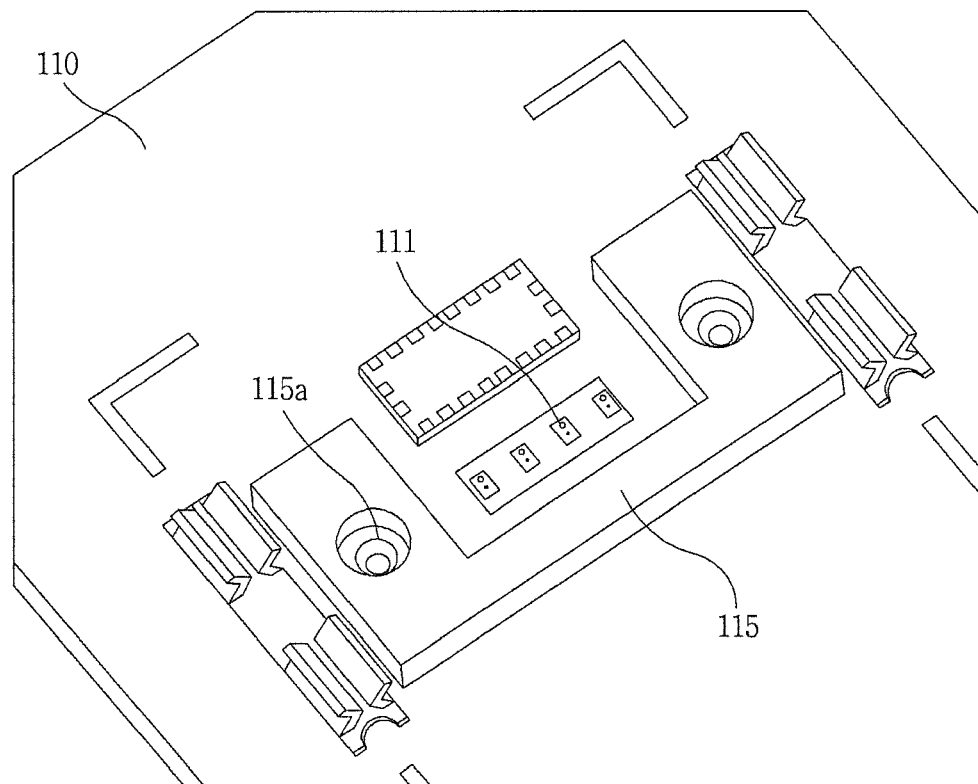


Fig. 10b

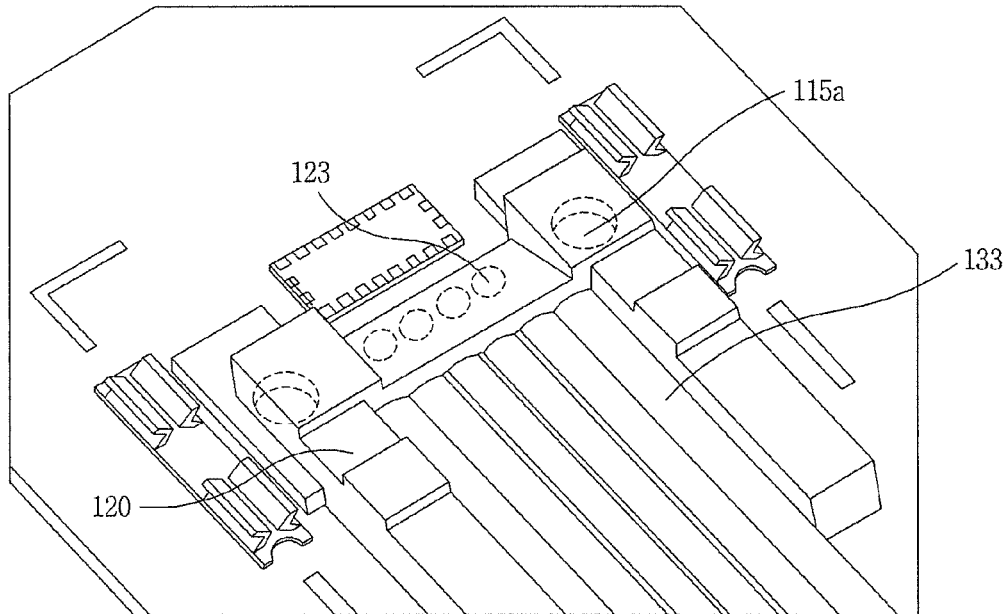


Fig. 10c

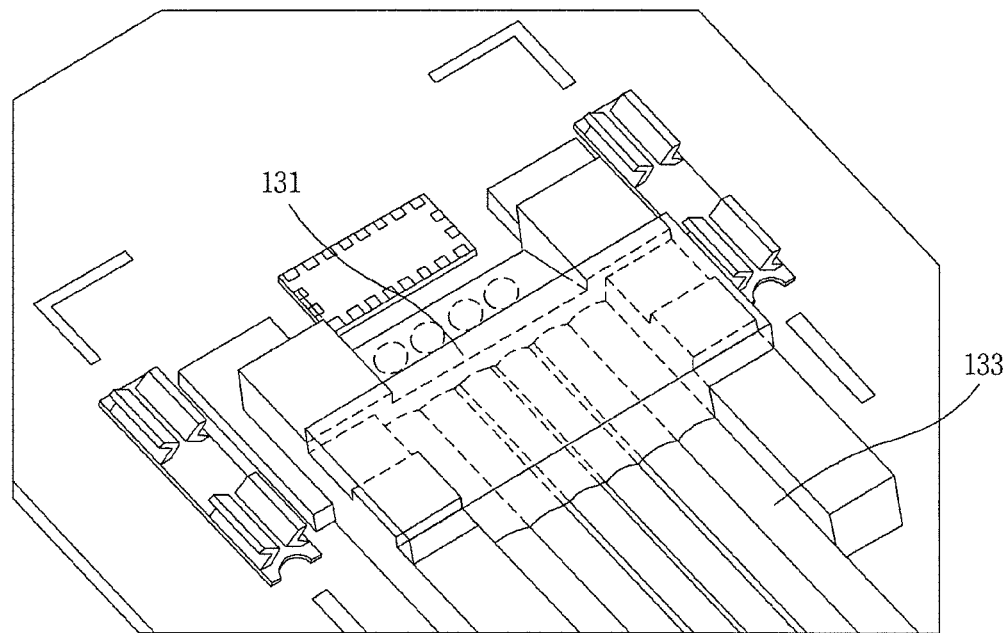
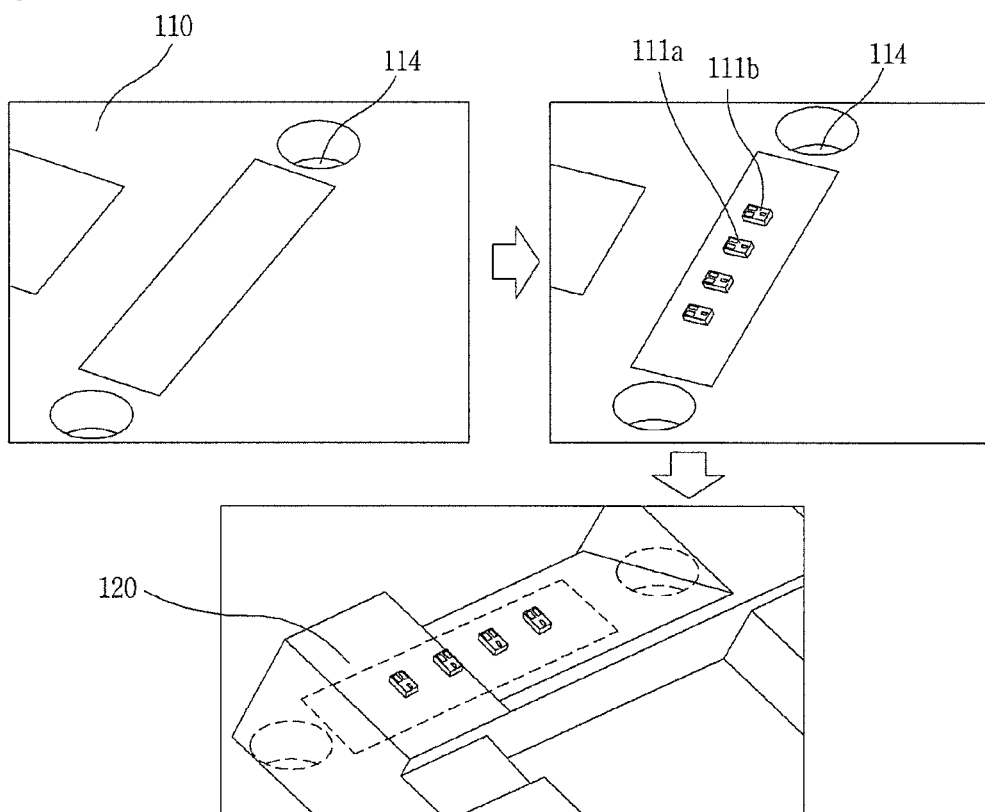


Fig. 11



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OPTICAL TRANSMISSION AND RECEIVING DEVICE FOR IMPLEMENTING PASSIVE ALIGNMENT OF COMPONENTS AND METHOD FOR PASSIVELY ALIGNING COMPONENTS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a United States National Stage Application under 35 U.S.C. §371 of International Patent Application No. PCT/KR2011/006902, filed Sep. 19, 2011, which claims the benefit to Korean Patent Application No. 10-2010-0091614, filed Sep. 17, 2010, each of which is incorporated by reference into this application as if fully set forth herein.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to an optical device for implementing passive alignment of parts and a method therefore, more particularly to an optical device and a method therefore that utilize an alignment reference part arranged on the substrate to passively align an optical element part with a lens-optical fiber connection part.

BACKGROUND ART

Methods of signal transmission based on fiber optics, which are already widely used in long-distance communication, provide the advantages of broad bands and immunity to electromagnetic interference (EMI), and are thus being applied to high-capacity digital media transmissions, such as for high-definition digital video display devices, which require high-speed, high-density data transmissions.

In conventional methods of signal transmission based on fiber optics, however, the optical device for coupling the light-emitting elements with the optical fiber or for coupling the light emitted from the optical fiber with the light-receiving elements is not only very expensive but also quite difficult to use in performing optical alignment.

In particular, in a conventional method of optical alignment, the optical transmitter part is implemented by attaching light-emitting elements and light-receiving elements for sensing the optical outputs of the light-emitting elements, and by coupling a lens for collecting the optical signals from the light-emitting element. Then, the optical fiber is inserted, active optical alignment is performed with the optical fiber inserted, and the optical fiber is secured at an optimum position, to complete the optical alignment of the optical transmitter.

Active optical alignment refers to a method of optical alignment in which an electric current is applied to the light-emitting elements to emit optical signals, the optical signals thus emitted pass through the lens to produce an image at a particular distance, the optical fiber is aligned at this position, and, as the detected amount of optical signals entering the optical fiber varies according to the degree of alignment, the position is found at which the highest optical signal value is detected. This method is used in most alignment and packaging applications involving optical fibers and optical elements.

The optical receiver part includes aligning the optical fiber with the light-receiving element, and its assembly process is very similar to that of the optical transmitter part.

This method of active optical alignment, in which the light-emitting element or light-receiving element is driven directly and the degree of alignment with the optical fiber is sensed in

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real time to yield the optimum degree of alignment, requires a time-consuming manufacture process and expensive assembly apparatus.

Whereas the active optical alignment method involves manufacturing optical modules by laser welding while detecting optical outputs or optical currents in real time, the passive optical arrangement method is a method of alignment that does not require directly driving the optical elements and refers to technology for assembling based only on predetermined position information, to be highly beneficial in mass production.

An aspect of the present invention is to provide an optical device that includes optical modules of smaller and simpler structures and uses a minimal number of parts, so that the costs of the optical modules can be reduced, and the optical alignment can be performed passively for multiple channels in a simple manner.

Another aspect of the present invention is to provide a method of passively aligning the parts of an optical device that can minimize the alignment error, even when performing alignment for the light-emitting elements, light-receiving elements, lenses, and optical fibers of multiple channels using optical modules.

SUMMARY

To resolve the technical problems above, an aspect of the present invention provides an optical device **100** for passive alignment of parts that includes: a substrate **110**; an optical element means **111** that includes light-emitting elements **111a** and light-receiving elements **111b**, mounted on the substrate **110**; an optical fiber **133** for implementing optical communication with the optical element means **111**; a lens-optical fiber connection means **120** for collecting light, altering an optical path, and securing and aligning the optical fiber **133**; and an alignment reference means **115** arranged on the substrate **110** for passively aligning the optical element means **111** and the lens-optical fiber connection means **120**.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a method for passive alignment of parts that includes: (a) coupling connection pillars **115b** of an alignment reference means **115** to substrate holes **114**; (b) aligning one or more light-emitting elements **111a** and one or more light-receiving elements **111b** in a row in a particular interval with respect to alignment holes **115a** arranged opposite each other in the alignment reference means **115**; (c) aligning a lens-optical fiber connection means **120** with respect to the aligning holes **115a**; and (d) aligning an optical fiber **133** with an optical alignment point at a surface **122b** of a prism forming a portion of the lens-optical fiber connection means **120**.

According to the present invention, the optical fiber **133a** is aligned in close contact with a surface **122b** of the prism **122**, so that there is no additional structure required for aligning the optical fiber **133a**, and the amount of reflection loss can be reduced at the reflective surface **122b** by index matching epoxy.

Also, the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** includes a focusing lens **123** for collecting and guiding the light, a prism **122** which alters the traveling direction of the light, and an optical fiber connector **121** which secures and aligns the optical fiber **133**, formed in a single structure, so that the number of parts may be reduced.

Thus, the present invention provides the advantages of simplifying passive optical alignment for multiple channels, so as to minimize alignment error, and of reducing and sim-

plifying the structure of the optical modules and minimizing the number of parts used, so as to lower the costs of the optical modules.

Since it is not necessary to apply large, complicated precision equipment for the optical alignment, the time required for the optical alignment can be reduced, and accurate alignment is guaranteed every time, providing benefits in terms of efficiency and convenience.

In addition, the present invention makes it possible to mass produce bi-directional optical devices that are simple both in structure and assembly method, so that data communication speeds at home or at the office can be improved with low costs, laying the foundations for greater advances in the Internet.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates the constitution of an optical device according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the constitution of the lens part and the optical paths in an optical transmitter according to the present invention.

FIG. 3a illustrates the constitution of the lens part for an example in which the focusing lens is arranged close to the light-emitting element in an optical transmitter according to the present invention.

FIG. 3b illustrates the constitution of the lens part for an example in which the focusing lens is arranged far away from the light-emitting element in an optical transmitter according to the present invention.

FIG. 4 illustrates the constitution of the lens part and the optical paths in an optical receiver according to the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a detailed illustration of the constitution of a lens-optical fiber connection part according to the present invention.

FIG. 6 is a detailed illustration of the constitution of an optical fiber pin according to the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a detailed illustration of the constitution of an alignment reference part according to the present invention.

FIG. 8 is an illustration for describing a method of aligning light-emitting elements and light-receiving elements using an alignment reference part according to the present invention.

FIG. 9 illustrates a metal case and case securing pins when they are detached and when they are coupled according to the present invention.

FIG. 10a is an illustration for describing a method of aligning light-emitting elements and light-receiving elements on a substrate.

FIG. 10b illustrates the lens-optical fiber connection part and the optical fiber coupled together according to the present invention.

FIG. 10c illustrates a module in which an optical fiber pin is coupled to the optical fiber to secure the optical fiber according to the present invention.

FIG. 11 illustrates a method of aligning parts with respect to holes in the substrate without using an alignment reference part, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NUMERALS

The following is a listing the features of the optical device according to the present invention.

- 110: substrate
- 111: optical element part
- 111a: light-emitting element

- 111b: light-receiving element
- 113: photoelectric converter part
- 114: substrate hole
- 115: alignment reference part
- 120: lens-optical fiber connection part
- 121: optical fiber connector
- 122: prism
- 123: focusing lens
- 125: lens part
- 126: optical fiber connector
- 131: optical fiber pin
- 133: optical fiber
- 141: case securing pin
- 143: metal case

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Specific embodiments of the present invention are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 illustrates the constitution of an optical device according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 1, an optical device 100 of the present invention includes a substrate 110, an optical element part 111 that includes light-emitting elements 111a and light-receiving elements 111b, a driver circuit 112, a photoelectric converter part 113 that includes the optical element part and the driver circuit 112, substrate holes 114, an alignment reference part 115 arranged on the substrate 110 for passively aligning the optical element part 111 and the lens-optical fiber connection part 120, a lens-optical fiber connection part 120 for collecting light, altering the optical path, and securing and aligning the optical fiber 133, an optical fiber pin 131 connected to one end of the lens-optical fiber connection part 120, an optical fiber 133 for implementing optical communication with the optical element part 111, case securing pins 141, and a metal case 143.

The driver circuit 112 is installed on the substrate 110, and the optical element part 111 is mounted on an upper portion of the substrate 110. The substrate holes 114 include two holes into which two connection pillars 115b on the alignment reference part 115 may be press fitted for connection.

For the optical fiber 133, a multi-channel ribbon optical fiber is used, which includes one or more optical fibers in an integrated form.

The lens-optical fiber connection part 120 includes a focusing lens 123 for collecting and guiding the light and a prism 122 that alters the light's traveling direction, and includes an optical fiber connector 121 that secures and aligns the optical fiber 133, all of which are formed as a single structure.

A detailed description is provided below, with reference to the drawings, on the constitution of the lens part 125 and its operating principles according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the constitution of the lens part and the optical paths in an optical transmitter according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. 2, the transmitter optical part 126 of the present invention includes a light-emitting element 111a, a focusing lens 123, a prism 122, and a transmitter-part optical fiber 133a.

The lens part 125 can be used for either the optical transmitter or the optical receiver, and one or more focusing lens 123 can be used.

The light 122c emitted from a light-emitting element 111a is collected after it passes through the focusing lens 123, where the collection involves altering the optical path of the transmitter-part beam 122c by way of total reflection at the

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reflective surface **122a** of the transmitter-part prism for coupling to the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**.

The transmitter-part optical fiber **133a** is aligned such that it is in close contact with a surface **122b** of the prism, thus providing the advantage that no additional structure is needed for aligning the optical fiber.

Also, if the securing includes the use of an epoxy adhesive having a similar refractive index between the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a** and the surface **122b** of the prism, the layer of air is eliminated, so that the aligning of the optical fiber is made simpler, and the reflection loss occurring at the reflective surface can be reduced.

The size of the transmitter optical part **126** can be reduced by installing the focusing lens **123** on a lower surface of the prism **122** in the direction in which the light-emitting element **111a** emits light and thereby decreasing the size for the guiding of the light.

The light **122c** incident on the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a** has to have an incident angle smaller than or equal to the NA (numerical aperture), in order to couple with the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**. Thus, a smaller traveling angle at which the light **122c** is incident on the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a** provides a greater optical coupling efficiency in coupling with the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**.

Therefore, in order to enhance the optical coupling efficiency at the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**, the focusing lens **123** is installed at a position close to the light-emitting element **111a**, as this can decrease the incident angle of the light **122c** on the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**.

FIG. **3a** and FIG. **3b** illustrate the constitution of the lens part for examples in which the focusing lens is arranged close to the light-emitting element **111a** and far away from the light-emitting element **111a**, respectively.

Referring to FIG. **3a** and FIG. **3b**, the cases are compared in which the focusing lens **123** is close to and far away from the light-emitting element **111a** under otherwise identical conditions, and the comparison shows that the case in which the focusing lens **123** is close to the light-emitting element **111a** provides a reduction in the light's maximum diameter by 1.5 times ($d_1 < d_2$) and a reduction in maximum angle by 2.5 times ($\theta_1 < \theta_2$), over the case in which the focusing lens is far away.

Thus, it can be seen that it is more advantageous, in terms of efficiency in optical coupling with the transmitter-part optical fiber **133a**, to arrange the focusing lens **123** close to the light-emitting element **111a**, i.e. at a position where the light emitted from the light-emitting element **111a** is directly received primarily, rather than to arrange the focusing lens **123** far away, i.e. at a position where the light emitted from the light-emitting element **111a** is received secondarily after it passes through the prism.

FIG. **4** illustrates the constitution of the lens part and the optical paths in an optical receiver according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **4**, the receiver optical part **126'** of the present invention includes a light-receiving element **111b**, a focusing lens **123'**, a prism **122'**, and a receiver-part optical fiber **133b**.

The light **122c'** transferred through the receiver-part optical fiber **133b** is emitted, passed through the prism **122'**, totally reflected at the receiver-part prism's reflective surface **122a'** to alter the optical path, passed through the focusing lens **123'**, and collected, to be coupled with the light-receiving element **111b**.

Referring to FIG. **3** and FIG. **4**, the transmitter-part and receiver-part optical fibers **133** of the present invention are

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aligned to be in close contact with a surface **122** of the prism, so that no additional structure is required when aligning the optical fibers **133**. Another advantage is that, if the securing includes the use of an epoxy adhesive having a similar refractive index between the optical fiber **133** and the surface **122** of the prism, the layer of air is eliminated, so that the aligning of the optical fiber is made simpler, and the reflection loss occurring at the reflective surface can be reduced.

A detailed description is provided below, with reference to the drawings, on the constitution and operation of the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** according to the present invention.

FIG. **5** is a detailed illustration of the constitution of a lens-optical fiber connection part according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **5**, the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** of the present invention includes a focusing lens **123** for collecting and guiding the light, a prism **122** for altering the traveling direction of the light, and an optical fiber connector **121** for securing and aligning the optical fiber **133**, all of which are formed as a single structure, so that the number of parts may be reduced.

Alignment pillars **127** on the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** passively couple with the alignment reference part **115** to implement optical alignment between the light-emitting element **111a** and light-receiving elements **111b** and the optical fiber **133**.

A description is provided below on a method of constituting and securing optical fiber pins according to the present invention.

FIG. **6** is a detailed illustration of the constitution of an optical fiber pin according to the present invention. Referring to FIG. **6**, the optical fiber pin **131** of the present invention includes "V"-shaped grooves **132** to secure the optical fiber **133** at the accurate position.

Although an optical fiber pin **131** is used for the present invention that includes grooves **132** shaped as a "V," it is obvious that the present invention is not thus limited, and various modifications can be employed.

A detailed description is provided below, with reference to the drawings, on the constitution of the alignment reference part **115** and the method of aligning parts using the alignment reference part **115** according to the present invention.

FIG. **7** is a detailed illustration of the constitution of an alignment reference part according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **7**, the alignment reference part **115** of the present invention includes alignment holes **115a**, shaped as circular indentations, and connection pillars **115b**, for connecting to the substrate holes **114**.

The alignment reference part **115** has its upper surface and lower surface bent with respect to the body to form a substantially "E" rectangular receptacle shape, and includes two alignment holes **115a**, which are used as alignment reference points, and two connection pillars **115b**.

FIG. **8** is an illustration for describing a method of aligning light-emitting elements and light-receiving elements using an alignment reference part according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **7** and FIG. **8**, a method of aligning parts according to the present invention includes, first, securing the connection pillars **115b** in the holes **114** of the substrate, and then passively aligning the light-emitting elements **111a** and the light-receiving elements **111b** in a row, with respect to the two alignment holes **115a** in the alignment reference part **115**.

Next, after passively coupling the two alignment holes **115a** of the alignment reference part **115** with the alignment pillars **127** of the lens-optical fiber connection part **120**, opti-

cal alignment is performed such that the lens part **125** and the light-emitting elements **111a** and light-receiving elements **111b** are aligned in a row.

In this way, the present invention can easily align optical elements in their desired positions by passive alignment.

A detailed description is provided below, with reference to the drawings, on the method of securing parts by way of a metal case **143** and case securing pins **141** according to the present invention.

FIG. **9** illustrates a metal case and case securing pins when they are detached and when they are coupled according to the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **9**, the metal case **143** encloses the light-emitting elements **111a**, light-receiving elements **111b**, and driver circuit to protect them from the external environment, and also presses on the optical fiber pin **131** to firmly secure the optical fiber.

The case securing pins **141** are coupled to the substrate **110** by surface mount technology (SMT) to firmly couple the substrate **110** with the metal case **143**.

A sequence of processes for passively aligning the parts of an optical device according to the present invention can be summarized as follows.

As a first step, the connection pillars **115b** of the alignment reference part **115** are coupled to the holes **114** of the substrate.

In the second step, the light-emitting elements **111a** and light-receiving elements **111b** are aligned in a row in particular intervals, with respect to the two alignment holes **115a** of the alignment reference part **115**.

In the third step, the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** is aligned with respect to the two alignment holes **115a**, which are arranged opposite each other in the alignment reference part **115**.

In the fourth step, the optical fiber **133** is aligned with the optical alignment point set at a surface **122b** of the prism forming a portion of the lens-optical fiber connection part **120**.

In the fifth step, the optical fiber **133** is secured with the optical fiber pin **131**, after which the metal case **143** is covered and coupled with the case securing pins **141**.

A description is provided below on a method of implementing the first through fourth steps above, with reference to FIGS. **10a** to **10c**.

FIG. **10a** is an illustration for describing a method of aligning light-emitting elements and light-receiving elements on a substrate.

FIG. **10a** shows the alignment reference part **115** and the substrate **110** coupled together, by the coupling of the two substrate holes **114** with the two connection pillars **115b** of the alignment reference part **115**.

Here, since the light-emitting elements **111a** and the light-receiving elements **111b** are aligned in particular intervals with respect to a line connecting the centers of the two alignment holes **115a** in the alignment reference part **115** coupled to the substrate **110**, any errors which may occur from the coupling of the alignment reference part **115** can be ignored.

FIG. **10b** illustrates the lens-optical fiber connection part and the optical fibers coupled together according to the present invention.

The lens-optical fiber connection part **120** is aligned with respect to each of the two circular alignment holes **115a** of the alignment reference part **115**.

Here, the alignment holes **115a** of the alignment reference part **115** are used as alignment points for the light-emitting elements **111a** and light-receiving elements **111b**, as well as alignments for the lens-optical fiber connection part **120**.

Also, according to the present invention, optical alignment with the focusing lens **123** is implemented by pressing the optical fiber pin **131** to passively couple the optical fiber **133** with the lens-optical fiber connection part **120**.

FIG. **10c** illustrates a module in which an optical fiber pin is coupled to the lens-optical fiber connection part and the optical fiber to secure the optical fibers according to the present invention.

FIG. **10c** shows the optical fiber **133** secured in position by passively aligning the optical fiber pin **131**.

FIG. **11** illustrates a method of aligning parts with respect to holes in the substrate without using an alignment reference part, according to another embodiment of the present invention.

Referring to FIG. **11**, a method of aligning parts according to another embodiment includes a first step of aligning the light-emitting elements **111a** and the light-receiving elements **111b** in particular intervals on the substrate **110** with the holes **114** of the substrate as alignment points, a second step of aligning the lens-optical fiber connection part **120** with the holes **114** of the substrate as alignment points, and a third step of aligning the optical fiber **133** with the optical fiber connector **121** to complete the optical alignment.

With this method, the substrate holes **114** are used as reference for the optical alignment, so that the alignment reference part **115** for optical alignment can be removed, and the number of parts can be reduced.

The major component parts included in the optical device of the present invention described above can be fabricated by injection molding, and since the parts of the focusing lens **123** and the prism **122** have to transmit light, these can be made by injection molding from a transparent material.

While the description above is provided mainly using the example of an optical device, the same may apply to any one of an optical transmitter, an optical receiver, and an optical transceiver.

While the technical spirit of the present invention has been described above with reference to the accompanying drawings, the description is intended only to provide preferred examples of the present invention and is not intended to limit the present invention. Also, it is an apparent fact that any person having ordinary skill in the field of art to which the present invention pertains can modify or copy the technical spirit in various ways without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The invention claimed is:

1. An optical device for passive alignment of parts, the optical device comprising:

- a substrate;
- optical elements mounted on the substrate for emitting and receiving light;
- an optical fiber for implementing optical communication with the optical elements;
- a lens-optical fiber connection means for collecting light, altering an optical path, and securing and aligning the optical fiber; and
- an alignment reference means arranged on the substrate for passively aligning the optical elements and the lens-optical fiber connection means, wherein the alignment reference means is bent in an upper surface, a body, and a lower surface thereof to form a substantially rectangular receptacle shape, and the alignment reference means has alignment holes used as alignment reference points on each of the upper surface and the lower surface, and connection pillars used for connecting to substrate holes formed in the substrate.

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2. The optical device of claim 1, wherein the lens-optical fiber connection means comprises alignment pillars configured to couple the lens-optical fiber connection means with the alignment reference means.

3. The optical device of claim 1, further comprising one or more light-emitting elements and one or more light-receiving elements to enable an implementation of an optical device for a single channel or for multiple channels.

4. The optical device of claim 1, wherein the optical fiber comprises a multi-channel ribbon optical fiber.

5. The optical device of claim 1, wherein the lens-optical fiber connection means comprises, as a single structure:

a focusing lens configured to collect and guide light;

a prism configured to alter a traveling direction of the light; and

an optical fiber connector configured to secure and align the optical fiber; and

the focusing lens, the prism, and the optical fiber connector are made from a transparent material and fabricated by injection molding.

6. The optical device of claim 5, wherein the focusing lens is arranged at a position where the light emitted from the optical elements are directly received by the focusing lens.

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7. The optical device of claim 5, wherein the optical fiber is aligned in close contact with a surface of the prism.

8. The optical device of claim 7, wherein the optical fiber and the surface of the prism are placed in close contact with each other by way of an epoxy adhesive having a similar refractive index applied therebetween.

9. The optical device of claim 1, further comprising an optical fiber pin for securing the optical fiber, the optical fiber pin being connected to one end of the lens-optical fiber connection means.

10. The optical device of claim 9, wherein the optical fiber pin comprises a V-shaped groove to secure the optical fiber.

11. The optical device of claim 1, further comprising a metal case for protecting the optical elements from an external environment and securing the lens-optical fiber connection means.

12. The optical device of claim 1, further comprising a driver circuit, one or more light-emitting elements and one or more light-receiving elements mounted on an upper portion of the substrate.

13. The optical device of claim 1, wherein the optical device is any one of an optical transmitter, an optical receiver, and an optical transceiver.

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